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Chairman: Mr. Suazo ..... (Honduras)
later: Mr. Benmellouk (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Morocco)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 84: Macroeconomic policy questions

(f) Preparations for the International Ministerial Meeting on Transit Transport Cooperation

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.2

1. **Mr. Vallenilla** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution entitled "Preparations for the International Ministerial Meeting on Transit Transport Cooperation" and informed the Committee that Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan had joined the sponsors.

(c) Science and technology for development (A/56/370 and Add.1; A/57/71-E/2002/52 and Add.1; A/C.2/57/2)

2. **Mr. Samassékou** (Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society), making a statement about the preparatory process for the World Summit on the Information Society, said that, over the past few years, new information and communication technologies had brought about fundamental changes in all areas of human activity. That process had created a new society, the information society, which, in theory, offered everyone the opportunity to produce, record, process and disseminate oral, written or visual information without the limitations of time, distance or volume.

3. At first, many people had thought that the information society was a promise of progress which would lead to a new distribution of activities, employment and wealth between the North and the South and would bring with it economic and social development and the strengthening of social justice in the world. However, that promise had not been fulfilled and, for the majority of humankind, the information society did not exist. Ninety-one per cent of Internet users lived in the rich countries, which were home to 19 per cent of the world's population. Consequently, the challenge lay in creating a common vision of the information society, establishing its fundamental rules, making it available to all humankind and putting it at the service of human development with a view to combating the digital divide. To achieve that aim, the South must be provided with the infrastructures that would enable it to become involved in that process. Such infrastructures should be used in such a way as to respect cultural and linguistic diversity and the necessary financial resources should be provided.

4. The aim of the World Summit on the Information Society, which would be held in two phases, in Geneva in December 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, was to meet those challenges. The Summit would consider methods of placing the information society revolution at the service of human development, of combating the digital divide and ensuring that new technologies did not obliterate cultures. To that end, a declaration and a plan of action would be adopted and the main stakeholders of the information society, namely States and intergovernmental organizations, private companies and civil society, would be able to participate in the drafting process which would take place throughout the preparatory process.

5. States must provide a secure and stable legal framework which guaranteed fair and transparent competition, which, in turn, would attract private investment. They must also create a framework for concerted action which would enable the constructive participation of that new society to prosper and benefit from the synergy between all the stakeholders. Intergovernmental organizations must develop standards to enable information and communication technology teams to work in networks at the global level; private companies must provide technologies tailored to local situations at a reasonable cost and invest in the construction and exploitation of the networks and civil society must supply the content for all areas of human activity.

6. The Summit would address, inter alia, the following issues: the legal framework, rules, competition and private investment; infrastructures and access to them; development, the knowledge society, the knowledge economy and employment; legal and security aspects; applications, content and cultural diversity; knowledge and training; the specific functions of women and young people and the active and effective participation of civil society.

7. From a political point of view, the preparation of the World Summit was an intergovernmental process led by a Preparatory Committee, the meetings of which were open to intergovernmental organizations, companies and civil society. Furthermore, four regional conferences, in Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America, had been planned. The preparatory process

was already under way but it was still necessary to overcome two obstacles: preventing procedural questions from prevailing over substantive ones and preventing technical issues from prevailing over legislative ones.

8. He hoped that the international consensus on sustainable development and the opportunities offered by information technologies would make it possible to build an information society with healthy economic foundations which was based on a democratic decision-making process. He also hoped that the Summit would help transform the information society into a communication society, the prelude to a new global dialogue.

9. **Mr. Gagnier** (Executive Coordinator of the secretariat of the World Summit on the Information Society), referring to the two documents entitled "Preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society" (A/57/71-E/2002/52 and Add.1), said that he thought it appropriate to provide an update on the preparations for the Summit. At the first session of the Preparatory Committee, held at the beginning of July, rules and provisions relating to the participation and accreditation of delegates had been adopted. That session, which had been attended by 142 Member States, had given participants the opportunity to engage in a useful and in-depth discussion on the themes of the Summit. In September, the Preparatory Committee had organized an informal meeting to consider more closely the themes and content which had not been the subject of detailed assessment. At that meeting, the themes, content and principles of both the preparatory process and the Summit had been more clearly defined.

10. The second session of the Preparatory Committee would be held in Geneva from 17 to 28 February. Invitations to that session had requested all interested parties to formulate specific proposals for action with a view to incorporating them into the draft plan of action for the Summit, on which the second session of the Preparatory Committee would focus. It was hoped that those specific proposals would be received by 7 December, at the latest. The third session of the Preparatory Committee was scheduled for September 2003. One of the important elements of the preparatory process was the series of regional conferences which would be held over the coming months and which would contribute to the second preparatory session. It was hoped that various international organizations would also make contributions.

11. With regard to the financial situation of the Summit and the preparatory process, the initial budget submitted and approved by the Council of the International Telecommunication Union amounted to 7.8 million Swiss francs. Only 2.2 million Swiss francs had been received. However, the situation was gradually improving thanks to new contributions. The European Union had pledged 300,000 euros, Spain had also indicated that it would be contributing and Canada had announced that it would be contributing 1 million Canadian dollars. Special mention should be given to the generous contributions of Japan and Switzerland, which were critical to the preparatory process.

12. With reference to General Assembly resolution 56/183, which called for the active and direct participation of all stakeholders of the information society, he said that there was a need to stress the importance of that participation in the Summit and the preparatory process. A number of parties involved in the process had voiced their dissatisfaction with the time allocated to them and the importance attributed to their contributions. If the World Summit on the Information Society was to be a success, it was essential that all parties were able to take part in and contribute to it. All the global, national and regional initiatives that were being carried out within the framework of the information society should be reflected in the World Summit.

13. **Mr. Khan** (Director of the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination) said that the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force was the first United Nations entity to bring together Government officials responsible for information and communication technologies policies, leaders in information technology from the private sector, non-governmental organizations and representatives of civil society and the main multilateral bodies. The Task Force had made effective use of its multilateral nature in order to set up global networks of interested parties, including a network of policy makers from all over the world, a number of regional networks and a network of working groups, which was contributing to issues such as access to information and communication technologies, human capacity-building and the participation of developing countries in international organizations related to information and communication technology. All those networks were participating effectively in the preparations for the World Summit on the Information

Society, to which the Task Force had accorded the highest priority.

14. The Task Force would devote its next session, which was to take place in Geneva during the second session of the Preparatory Committee, to the issue of its contribution to the Summit and the contribution of the networks it had set up.

15. Lastly, he reiterated the full support of the United Nations, in particular of the Secretariat and the Task Force, for the preparatory process for the Summit and assured the Committee that all Member States would be made aware of the importance of the Summit, not only as a technical meeting but also as a global political forum in which the profile of the information society would be outlined, the methods of achieving the objectives of the information society would be agreed upon and collaborative relationships to put those methods into practice would be established.

16. **Mr. Hernández** (Joint Inspection Unit) introduced the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on United Nations system support for science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (A/56/370 and Add.1), the third of a series of reports aimed at assessing the support extended by the United Nations system to endogenous capacity-building in science and technology in the developing countries, as mandated by resolutions and programmes of action adopted at various conferences and meetings over the past two decades.

17. The preparation of the report had coincided with high-profile declarations and recommendations on the subject of science and technology made at various intergovernmental meetings, such as the South Summit of the Group of 77 and China, held in Havana in April 2000, which had expressed deep concern at the fact that the United Nations was increasingly marginalized in the area of science and technology, and resolved to make science and technology a priority item on national agendas and in South-South Cooperation. Similarly, the summit of the Group of Eight (G-8) major industrialized countries, held in Okinawa, Japan, in July 2000, had pledged its support for narrowing the digital divide between North and South. The declarations adopted at the Millennium Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development had recognized the power of science and technology to accelerate the attainment of international development goals.

18. The objective of the report was to assess the extent to which the political declarations and legislative measures adopted by Member States were being translated into the programmes of the United Nations system, and whether the results achieved had had any impact on improving the lives of beneficiaries. Its central finding was that the United Nations system had indeed responded to the science and technology priorities of Governments in the Latin American and Caribbean region, particularly in capacity-building, institution-building, human resources development and the promotion of networks, including modalities for technical cooperation among developing countries. However, the report also revealed some systemic weaknesses in the support provided by the United Nations system: insufficient joint or multi-agency initiatives for capacity-building in science and technology in the region; very limited resources budgeted for science and technology initiatives; and weak linkages between the projects and productive economic sectors. Those shortcomings could be traced to the dissolution in the 1990s of United Nations central support structures, especially the Centre on Science and Technology for Development, which had resulted in lower priority being given to the field of science and technology within the United Nations system.

19. In order to overcome those weaknesses, the report recommended the establishment of a United Nations system joint programme for science and technology involving all the specialized agencies in addition to United Nations bodies. It was also recommended that the programme should initially focus on three priority areas: biotechnology, environmentally sound technologies, and information and communication technologies. The proposed programme would make it possible to respond more effectively to global priorities in science and technology, enable Member States to follow through on the science and technology goals set out in the declarations adopted at the aforementioned summits, and provide capacity to coordinate resource mobilization, research and development and field operations.

20. **Ms. Villalobos** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the development of science and technology was essential to the achievement of economic growth and sustainable development. Yet, know-how and technology remained concentrated in a small number of countries and most

of the world's population did not fully benefit from advances in science and technology. The developing countries had been left behind, and economic and social disparities between the developed and developing countries had grown.

21. In order to remedy that situation, technology transfers should be at the service of development for all and the United Nations must focus its activities on science and technology for development. New mechanisms were needed for cooperation among Governments, enterprises and the academic community, in order to build human capacities by promoting education, training and innovation and encouraging small and medium enterprises and microenterprises.

22. The South Summit of the Group of 77 had emphasized the need to ensure access for the South to knowledge and technology and to strengthen the role of the United Nations in eliminating obstacles to that access. The Group of 77 and China urged the United Nations to focus its efforts on technology transfer and the promotion of endogenous technology in order to improve the competitiveness of the developing countries.

23. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had a clear mandate to coordinate technology-related activities within the United Nations system. That mandate had been broadened in 1993 when the United Nations had begun to provide substantive services to the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, helping to coordinate the activities of the United Nations system in the area of science and technology for development. She commended UNCTAD for its initiative in establishing the Science and Technology for Development Network, which provided useful information on activities relating to science and technology and publicized scientific and technological advances which were important for the developing countries. She also thanked the Commission on Science and Technology for Development for its contribution to the preparatory process for the World Summit on the Information Society. The Group of 77 and China wished to play a constructive part in that process, and believed that science and technology were a key aspect in sustainable development strategies.

24. Progress in science and technology had a significant impact on almost all aspects of life and on national economies, particularly those of the developing countries. The United Nations must therefore be provided with sufficient resources to fulfil its mandate to assist the developing countries in elaborating policies and strategies to bridge the North-South technology gap.

25. She welcomed the efforts of the ICT Task Force to establish a broad system of coordination in the area of information and communication technologies. International cooperation in that area should be intensified, with emphasis on endogenous capacity-building in the developing countries and the promotion and financing of technology transfers to those countries on favourable conditions, including mutually agreed concessionary and preferential credit terms, taking into account their particular needs. Lastly, she urged the developed countries to create the necessary conditions so that all could reap the benefits of progress and innovation in the sphere of science and technology.

26. **Mr. Staehelin** (Switzerland) said that information and communication technologies offered enormous potential for human development since they could be a catalyst for economic growth, good governance, the betterment of living standards and the integration of isolated and disadvantaged communities. However, although several significant initiatives had been undertaken in order to put those technologies at the service of development, such as the ICT Task Force of the United Nations, the G-8 Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force), the World Economic Forum's Global Digital Divide Initiative (GDDI) and the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), they had not yet found a focal point which would make it possible to take advantage of the potential synergy between them.

27. The World Summit on the Information Society would seek to remedy that situation by bringing together all actors — States, international organizations, the private sector and civil society — and forging a global consensus with a view to reaping the rewards of the technological revolution and putting them at the service of the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The preparations for the Summit and, in particular, the first session of the Preparatory Committee in July had made it possible to establish the institutional framework of the Summit and outline its agenda. Consequently, it was now time to fix priorities with a view to the adoption of a declaration and a plan of action in December 2003.

28. Within the framework of that process, the first priority was the integration of the results of all the planned regional conferences into a single document, to be submitted to the Preparatory Committee, which would include the first draft declaration and plan of action. Secondly, there must be enhanced cooperation between the executive secretariat, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the other interested international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, the United Nations ICT Task Force, the G-8 DOT Force, the regional economic commissions, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which must actively contribute to the preparatory process of the Summit in order to make good use of potential synergy and to avoid duplication or wastage of efforts.

29. Inclusion must be the guiding principle behind the preparations for the Summit at all levels, and all States and Governments, as well as social groups, communities and the private sector, a key player in the process, must take part in them. Multi-stakeholder initiatives could play a leading and facilitating role in the contribution of information and communication technologies to development, although new participation mechanisms applicable to that inclusive process, such as "networked events", should be developed, since an architecture which completed the intergovernmental Summit with parallel official platforms would enhance the possibilities for all non-governmental participants to have their voices heard.

30. The Summit must also address in an integrated fashion the whole range of relevant issues raised by the advent of the information society. In addition to infrastructure and technology, those issues included such factors as capacity- and institution-building, contextualizing information and defending cultural and linguistic diversity. Questions related to e-commerce, information and network security, data protection, respect for user privacy or the fight against cybercrime required global solutions. Regulatory frameworks at the global, regional, national and local levels and human-rights-related issues must also be considered. In his opinion, education and training, in the broader sense, and the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity were of the utmost importance in reducing the digital divide and facilitating the integration of all countries into the information society.

31. **Mr. Hassan** (Pakistan) said that he wished to associate himself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Practical measures should be adopted at the national and international levels to ensure that the information and communication revolution benefited each and every inhabitant of the planet. At the global level, the United Nations must play a leading role in promoting the transfer of information and communication technologies and knowledge to the developing countries. The two initiatives recently launched by the United Nations or with its support, namely the establishment of the United Nations ICT Task Force and the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society, were indicative of the immense potential of the United Nations in spreading the benefits of new technologies all over the world.

32. At the 2002 special meeting of the General Assembly on information and communication technologies, non-access to technology had been recognized as the most significant problem faced by the developing countries. Consequently, the international community should give high priority to strengthening efforts to transfer technologies to developing countries on a preferential basis. In that connection, priority should be given to the implementation of pre-existing multilateral commitments, in particular the incentives provided for and agreed upon in article 66, paragraph 2, of the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). During that meeting, it was also agreed that although access to technology was the key to development, access alone was not sufficient. Information and communication technologies must be accompanied by, inter alia, the provision of electricity, infrastructure and computers and adequate financing and skills.

33. The forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society would offer an opportunity to respond to those challenges in a renewed spirit of cooperation. It should promote the development of information and communication technologies and eliminate all the obstacles restricting the access of developing countries to those technologies. Such obstacles were also restricting the efforts of small and medium-sized enterprises to become useful actors in the global information society in the face of the

commercial policies of large multinationals. The Summit should also propose short- and long-term measures in the areas of education, capacity-building, human resources development and the exchange of information and experiences so that the developing countries could take full advantage of the benefits of the information society. Only then would the international community achieve a solid and sustainable global information society.

34. In the context of its development strategy, Pakistan had adopted a dynamic policy to promote information and communication technologies whose principal elements were large-scale training, the design of legislative and regulatory frameworks, the provision of incentives for investors and the creation of an efficient and cost-effective infrastructure that would provide affordable and widespread access to those technologies. However, all the efforts of developing countries would be in vain if the international community, led by the United Nations, did not make commensurate efforts to support them. In that regard, he proposed that the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development should be strengthened and that sufficient resources from the regular budget should be allocated to finance the activities of the United Nations system in the area of the promotion of science and technology for development. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in collaboration with the relevant United Nations bodies, should undertake a study to identify areas of potential partnership between the United Nations and the private sector. The Secretariat of the United Nations and the funds and programmes should explore all possible avenues for launching a capacity-building campaign aimed at the developing countries, in particular through enhanced South-South cooperation. Lastly, specific measures should be taken to implement articles 7 and 8 of the TRIPS Agreement, which facilitated access to and dissemination and transfer of technologies.

35. **Mr. Stanislavov** (Russian Federation) said that his Government fully supported the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society, an international forum which would offer a unique opportunity to consider various aspects of the establishment of a worldwide information society.

36. The Summit should not limit itself to discussing technical aspects of overcoming the digital divide; it should also set out a broad framework for action, taking into account the social, economic, political and cultural aspects of the information society, with a view to making effective use of the capacities of information and communication technologies to achieve sustainable development. It was essential to focus on aspects such as national sovereignty, security in cyberspace, freedom of information and the protection of human rights in worldwide communications, and to ensure that the Summit decisions would reflect in a balanced way the challenges and opportunities arising out of progress in information and communication technologies. It was also important to make an objective analysis of the experience gained so far and of new initiatives relating to the establishment of the worldwide information society at the international, regional and national levels.

37. The Russian Federation could make a major contribution to efforts to overcome the digital divide and establish a worldwide information society. Its broad experience in introducing new information and communication technologies by means of the most economical methods, making optimal use of the existing analog network and in many cases on the basis of domestically developed analog and digital technologies, was of great interest for many countries, particularly the developing countries. That experience was particularly useful when investment levels were low and there were wide disparities in standards of living among different population groups.

38. His delegation was taking an active part in the preparatory process for the Summit, welcomed the results of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society and emphasized the importance of preparatory activities at the regional level.

39. It was for the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, as coordinator of the preparations for the Summit, to obtain the necessary resources to finance those preparations and the holding of the Summit. Funding should be obtained from the private sector and civil society and from other extrabudgetary financing mechanisms.

40. **Mr. Shinde** (India) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His Government attached great importance to science and technology as a determining factor in development and economic growth, and had

been focusing its efforts on improving the quality of science and technology institutions and promoting education and training at all levels. India's investment in research and development had risen substantially over the past five decades, and his Government intended to increase it to 2 per cent of GDP over the next five years. The efforts of the developing countries in that regard, however, represented a minute fraction of their requirements. The developed countries had at their command the necessary financial resources for scientific research. According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2000, spending in 1998 on research and development by the 29 countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had exceeded the entire economic output of the world's 30 poorest countries. He therefore called on the developed countries to fulfil their commitment to transfer technology to the developing countries on concessional terms to enable them to address development and environmental challenges, as stipulated in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

41. The efforts of the developing countries at the national level must be complemented by an international environment that took into account their need for access to a broad range of technologies in crucial social and economic areas. In the light of constant technological innovations, the transfer and assimilation of technical know-how must take place in a timely manner and in favourable conditions. However, the cost of technology transfer to developing countries through current intellectual property regimes had risen sharply; those regimes must be reviewed in order to strike a more equitable balance between the need to reward innovation and the need to ensure widespread dissemination of knowledge and technology. His delegation welcomed the Doha Ministerial Declaration, with its flexible interpretation of aspects of intellectual property rights in relation to trade in the area of public health, an interpretation which should be extended to other social areas where applications of science and technology were critical for human welfare.

42. The international community must increasingly promote research in technologies which, like biotechnology and information and communication technologies, offered great potential for humanity; safety requirements and ethical values must also be taken into account. It was unfortunate that, despite many efforts, no consensus had yet been reached on the right way to make use of information and communication technologies to help the developing countries in their efforts to secure a better standard of living for their peoples. In the meantime, the digital divide continued to widen.

43. The United Nations must play a leading role in harnessing science and technology for development. The work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the United Nations ICT Task Force would contribute immensely to the World Summit on the Information Society. The first South-South High-level Conference on Science and Technology, to be held in Dubai from 27 to 30 October 2002, would play an important part in helping institutions of the South to promote knowledge and technology in the developing countries.

44. *Mr. Benmellouk (Morocco) took the Chair.*

45. **Mr. Niculescu** (Romania) said that the unprecedented development of information and communication technologies had brought about fundamental changes in society. The objective of the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society was to reduce the digital divide so that the vast majority of the world's population could have access to the economic, social and cultural benefits of the information society.

46. Regional conferences were at the very core of the preparation process for the Summit, and Romania would have the honour of hosting the upcoming Pan-European Regional Ministerial Conference, which would focus on the need to maintain the balance between regional specificity and the global dimension, strengthen cooperation among the participating States with a view to adopting a common action plan, provide an opportunity to consider strategies, achievements and challenges to help the participants to have an accurate view of progress towards the information society and develop a platform for dialogue that included all major stakeholders at the European level, including Governments, civil society, the private sector and international bodies. He hoped that the Conference would prove useful in preparing for meetings at the Geneva and Tunis Summits and would provide a better picture of how to meet the challenges of the information society.

47. **Mr. Maquieira** (Chile) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the

representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The topic of science and technology for development was of particular interest for Chile, and the first Biotechnology World Forum would take place from 9 to 12 December 2003 in the Chilean city of Concepción.

48. The spectacular progress made over the past three decades in the area of biotechnology had caused many countries to convert and modernize traditional industries and create new ones. That had led to both problems and opportunities of all kinds for economic and social development. That progress should be exploited for the benefit of all humanity and should be developed in accordance with a set of internationally agreed ethical values and principles.

49. The various applications of biotechnology had made it possible to reclaim contaminated areas, recycle refuse and develop cleaner industrial production processes. In the field of human health, the number of incurable diseases had been cut by more than half and ever more effective medicines had been produced. Significant progress had also been achieved in the treatment of ailments such as haemophilia, hepatitis, cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.

50. The impact of new biotechnological applications on the economies of developing countries had been analysed in a number of multilateral forums. The issue had been mentioned specifically in Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit, and in paragraph 42 of the plan of implementation adopted at the Johannesburg Summit. Pursuant to the agreements reached at those two Summits, it was intended that the Biotechnology World Forum would begin a comprehensive discussion which would lead to transfers of knowledge, the protection of biodiversity and the adoption of a strategy to reduce the growing inequalities between rich and poor countries.

51. His Government wished to contribute to those forums of dialogue for international cooperation, and the President of Chile had ordered the establishment of a national commission for biotechnology development, incorporating representatives of various bodies, to elaborate a strategy for public policy. Desirous of cooperating with Member States and other relevant actors to promote the sharing of knowledge and experience and to construct areas of agreement which would have a positive impact on the economic development of nations and the welfare of their peoples, Chile had co-sponsored the draft resolution introduced by the Group of 77 and China.

52. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that those States fully associated themselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

53. Science and technology were the engine of sustainable human development and economic growth; its various forms could help to create competitive advantages and wealth and to improve the quality of life. Information and communication technologies could have a positive impact on all sectors of society. It was therefore essential to bridge the digital divide in that area and help the developing countries to acquire the necessary scientific and technological knowledge and infrastructure to be able to benefit from globalization and avoid marginalization.

54. In the CARICOM countries, the areas most likely to be affected by scientific and technological advances were poverty reduction, universal education, economic growth, public information, governance and the general functioning of the CARICOM single market and economy. The creation of the information society and the reduction of inequalities in that area should be considered at the highest political level and CARICOM must develop a common strategy for information and communication technologies.

55. CARICOM could and should have an impact on the global process of information and communication technologies through the Latin American and Caribbean Network of the ICT Task Force, a United Nations body intended to provide overall leadership in the formulation of information and communication technology development strategies, the bridging of the digital divide and the use of such technology to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

56. The CARICOM States welcomed the proposal of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development with regard to the establishment of an international mechanism for supporting and enhancing research and development in the developing countries and in areas critical for those countries. It was particularly important to strengthen the science and technology infrastructure in the field of health in order

effectively to tackle the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the Caribbean.

57. Recent innovations in biotechnology had created new opportunities in the fields of agriculture, livestock and aquaculture, improved human health and protection of the environment. South-South and North-South cooperation must be strengthened, and in that context her delegation welcomed the upcoming South-South High-level Conference on Science and Technology, to be held in Dubai, and the first Biotechnology World Forum, to be held in Chile. The organizations of the United Nations system should also cooperate with the numerous science and technology networks in Latin America and the Caribbean.

58. Measures should be taken to transfer technology to developing countries, particularly through foreign direct investment. Intellectual property rights must also be protected; the CARICOM States therefore welcomed the outcome document of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Ministerial Level Meeting on Intellectual Property for Caribbean Countries, held in Suriname on 5 and 6 June 2002. She also welcomed the decision by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to establish a special trust fund for activities in the area of science and technology for development, and the decision of the Council of the International Telecommunication Union to hold a World Summit on the Information Society.

59. It was essential to adhere to relevant international standards and agreements for the promotion of ethical use of science and technology and combating crime in that area. The United Nations could play an important part in that regard by cooperating through projects with universities and other information and communication technology institutions in the Caribbean.

60. **Mr. Ragab** (Egypt), after expressing his delegation's condolences to the delegation of Indonesia and to those of other countries that had lost citizens in the terrorist attacks that had occurred over the weekend, said that Egypt associated itself with the statement made by the delegation of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

61. The activities of the United Nations in the area of science and technology represented the beginning of the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, which stressed the need to provide assistance to developing countries to redress the information gap in developing countries. The information revolution — the rapid exchange of data and of social and scientific research through information networks and databases — was the best tool available to States for promoting progress in all areas of life, and, in particular, for overcoming social obstacles that hindered development, such as epidemics, an insufficient number of schools, or inadequate school programmes. All documents issued by the General Assembly and by the competent bodies concerned affirmed the need to attend to the technological needs of developing countries, by way of negotiations with the private sector and the information giants, which should allow them to obtain their products at reasonable prices. Although some developing countries had had quite satisfactory experiences in that regard, they still lacked the necessary infrastructure.

62. His delegation welcomed the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society and its preparatory process, and commended the work of the Governments of Switzerland and Tunisia and of other countries that were hosting regional preparatory meetings. It was crucial for the Summit to consider the fundamental questions raised by the information society, namely: the establishment of infrastructure; equitable access by all to the benefits of the information society; its services and uses; the needs of users and the social, economic and environmental aspects of its use; and the impact of information and communication technologies on education. It must also take into consideration all aspects of development and the economy, as well as social, cultural and technological policies, which demonstrated the cultural differences among peoples and States but did not prevent them from engaging in a dialogue that would lead to a peaceful and prosperous future.

63. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and commended Chile and UNIDO for taking the initiative in organizing the Global Biotechnology Forum to be held in 2003. The United Nations had kept pace with developments in science and technology, and the decision of the Economic and Social Council to hold yearly meetings of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development would strengthen the work of the Organization in that area.

64. The World Summit on the Information Society, which would be held in the coming months, was a

signal event for the world community. The name alone encompassed all the issues raised by the digital revolution and attested to the vast influence that information and communication technologies had had on economies and societies in recent years. Brazil had done its utmost to place such technologies at the service of development and democracy. Its information society programme, which took a multisectoral approach, promoted the use of information and communications technologies in the areas of education, health and public administration, and endeavoured to spread the use of such technologies into all segments of the population, through the development of local content, the establishment of links between libraries and universities, and the promotion of distance learning. Such technologies had also helped to improve public services and to strengthen democracy. An important example had been its use in the electoral process. In addition to those national initiatives, Brazil had been taking part in international meetings and had worked to promote regional cooperation.

65. The World Summit on the Information Society should focus on development and support the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals. It should address the digital divide, by supporting the efforts of all developing countries to tap the potential of information and communication technologies. International cooperation was vital in bridging that divide; there was vast unexplored potential for North-South and South-South cooperation. The developed and developing countries, the international institutions, the non-governmental organizations and the private sector should join together in their efforts to promote technology transfers, investments in infrastructure, and capacity-building. Nevertheless, in the promotion of partnerships a commercial approach should be avoided, and development priorities must not be lost from sight.

66. The importance of information and communication technologies had resulted in their appearance on the agendas of various forums. Although that development was welcome, it also raised the question whether important decisions were being made without the adequate participation of the developing countries. The Summit offered a unique opportunity to respond to that concern. As an intergovernmental forum of universal composition, it would be able to look at the issue from many angles and adopt legitimate decisions. The Summit could play a key role in the issue of Internet governance, since it was necessary to enhance the participation of developing countries in deliberations on the structure and functioning of cyberspace. The Summit and its preparatory process must take place in a transparent, open and democratic manner. Its success would be measured by the extent to which it contributed towards turning the digital divide into opportunities and promoting development.

67. **Mr. Ayari** (Tunisia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Scientific and technological research, in particular research into information and communications technologies, played a fundamental role in the promotion of development. Moreover, the integration of the developing countries in a knowledge-based economy would offer new opportunities for economic growth and social development. In accordance with the Millennium Declaration, in which the Heads of State and Government had decided to ensure that the benefits of those technologies were available to all, it was important to facilitate access to knowledge and technologies and transfer them to the developing countries on favourable terms in order to strengthen their technical capacity, productivity and competitiveness in the global market. It was also important to determine what were the obstacles and unjustifiable restrictions that were impeding their transfer.

68. Because of the importance which the United Nations attached to the economy and to science and technology, it was the ideal forum in which to find solutions to the gulf which separated peoples in all areas. In that connection, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development should play a prominent role, especially in the health, education and agriculture sectors. It was important that the Commission and its secretariat should have the necessary resources to carry out its mandate and contribute to the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the major international conferences and world summits, in particular the World Summit held in Johannesburg. The United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force should be the body to guide the activities undertaken by the Organization to formulate development strategies in that area.

69. Tunisia had agreed to host the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2005 because it was convinced that it would provide a forum for the elaboration of cooperation plans designed to reduce the digital divide. The inadequate access of the developing countries to information and communications technologies could exacerbate their marginalization and delay their integration into the global economy, as had been emphasized during the session of the General Assembly on information and communications technologies in June 2002. In that connection, his country had adopted a strategy based on the modernization of the information and communications infrastructure, the organization of the rules and regulations governing the sector, and the development of human resources, both on the basis of training and through the establishment of 10 specialized technological parks by the year 2010. That approach had produced a national response to the global needs for information, such as electronic paging, the security of transactions, and instruments of access to new applications. Tunisia had also provided a new perception of regional and international cooperation and its experience could serve as an example for developing countries which wished to provide themselves with national strategies to bring about the information society.

70. He emphasized the need for Governments, civil society, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to participate actively in the preparations for the Summit, in the forthcoming regional conferences and in the Summit itself. He also drew the attention of delegations to the draft resolution which his country, jointly with Switzerland, would submit for the approval of the Second Committee concerning the World Summit on the Information Society. The support of all Member States for that draft resolution would confirm the general determination to combine efforts to overcome the digital divide, an essential condition for the establishment of a world information society.

71. **Ms. Gustafson** (United States of America) said that her country proposed that the World Summit on the Information Society should focus on three key areas: network security, infrastructure development and human capacity-building. Member States must be alert to any attempt to utilize the preparatory process for the Summit to impose censorship on the Internet or any other form of communication. It was important to recognize that much information was protected by existing intellectual property regimes or represented government or business proprietary information.

72. The information society could only thrive if its critical infrastructure was properly protected. The key to such protection was not law or regulation, but rather the culture and habits of those who used the infrastructure. In that connection, her country was preparing a draft resolution which would establish the fundamental principles of a global culture of cyber security, and, on 19 October, would host an informal meeting to discuss the draft resolution.

73. **Ms. Lewis** (International Labour Organization) said that the rapid evolution of information and communications technologies was increasing the economic and social disparities between and within countries. While those countries which had good telecommunications networks, a skilled workforce, a relevant infrastructure and supportive policies had enjoyed rapid productivity growth, both in the core information and communications technologies sector and in other sectors, countries which did not have those advantages had found it increasingly difficult to gain access to global markets.

74. The International Labour Organization was guardedly optimistic about the employment opportunities that would be generated by the new information and communications technologies, which were associated with the creation of new jobs and new working methods. Those technologies had, for example, generated a rapid growth in the services sector. With the introduction of the Internet and e-mail, self-employment had also increased, and that had benefited women since working at home enabled them to organize their family life more efficiently. Moreover, the separation of work from physical location made it possible to relocate jobs from industrialized countries to developing countries in the form of "back-office" staff in call centres, data entry and software development. It was estimated that up to 5 per cent of all service sector jobs (about 12 million jobs) in industrialized countries could be relocated to developing countries in that way.

75. On the other hand, the new information and communications technologies were also associated with job loss, especially as a result of obsolescence, automation and "disintermediation", as well as the reduction of units of production, the increase in

outsourcing and the decrease in the number of core posts. In that connection, there was a clear need for worker protection.

76. Information and communications technologies could be a tool for development, offering small enterprises in countries which did not have the necessary physical infrastructure to fulfil transactions the opportunity to access global markets through the Internet. Through wireless applications, developing countries could save themselves the costs of expensive fixed-wire communications infrastructures. With the right mix of information and communications technological skills and policies, countries could become important locations in global markets for intangible products or information technology products.

77. There was no doubt that the new technologies offered the potential for employment growth, a better quality of life and the reinforcement of the development agenda. The challenge posed at the World Summit was to ensure that that potential was translated into reality for the majority of the world's people. The International Labour Organization fully endorsed the World Summit and hoped that it would allow the world community to devise strategies that would bridge the digital divide.

78. **Mr. Fasehun** (World Intellectual Property Organization) said that advances in science and technology were propelled by innovation and creativity, which were vital components of intellectual property. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) had undertaken new programmes designed to ensure that all countries benefited from intellectual property, such as the use of innovation and creativity for wealth creation, encouraging the development of intellectual capital in all nations and practical use of intellectual property by small and medium-sized enterprises to gain and enhance market share.

79. Cognizant of the fact that the beneficial use of intellectual property rested on creating sustainable intellectual property institutions, WIPO had assisted many member States to upgrade their intellectual property offices and had taken a number of initiatives, including the deployment of automation projects, evaluation of proposals and the provision of technical advice. WIPO had launched automation projects in various countries and was continuing the development and execution of the Regional Information System Project for Caribbean Countries. It had also provided advice on the computerization of intellectual property offices to countries in transition. WIPONET, the global information network of his organization, had to date connected over 40 of the 300 intellectual property offices it planned to connect in all WIPO member States. The WIPONET project included many other services and benefits, including the provision of basic computing infrastructure and Internet connectivity, speedy and secure communications, data exchange with other intellectual property offices and WIPO, remote participation in WIPO meetings, and training and upgrading of staff skills through distance learning programmes.

80. **Mr. Blanco Dominguez** (Dominican Republic), associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that his country, elected as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society and host country for the regional preparatory meeting in March 2003, was making strenuous efforts at the national and regional levels to benefit from the Summit, which would no doubt serve as catalyst for the financial and human resources needed to realize the Millennium Development Goals.

81. The impoverishment of peoples could be addressed in the medium term only through education designed to enhance welfare and universalize technological know-how. His Government was making considerable efforts through the permanent telemedicine programme, the virtual classrooms system and the rural communications programme to give the majority of the population effective access to technological advances. However, much remained to be done in the developing countries in the area of information technologies. His delegation therefore appealed to the major technology producing countries to make available on favourable terms to developing countries the technological factors that would give the most disadvantaged segments of the population access to know-how.

82. He welcomed the Chilean Government's initiative to host the first Global Technology Forum in December 2003 and noted that, at the national level, the establishment of the national council on competitiveness had led to the inclusion of the productive sectors in the development, together with the relevant government authorities, of coherent

capacity-building policies through the rational use of international technology transfer programmes.

83. **Mr. Tzotzos** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) informed the Second Committee that the Director General of UNIDO had accepted with pleasure the Chilean Government's request to organize, under the auspices of UNIDO as Task Manager for chapter 16 of Agenda 21, the Global Biotechnology Forum to be held in Concepcion, Chile, from 9 to 12 December 2003.

84. UNIDO had a long tradition of being involved in promoting new technologies as well as interacting with industry and public sectors in the acquisition and transfer of technology. Within the Global Forum, UNIDO provided a platform for the exchange of views, ideas and experiences among developing and developed countries on cross-sectoral issues that currently attracted international attention and had a high potential for economic and social development; one such issue was biotechnology. UNIDO had undertaken a number of initiatives in that field over the years, including the establishment of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB). It was currently engaged in a number of biotechnology-related programmes, including the support of the Biosafety Clearing House established under the Cartagena Protocol and the Regional Latin American Consultative Group on Biotechnology, which was established in 2001. Over the past decade, UNIDO had been managing the Biosafety Information Network and Advisory Service, which monitored global developments in biotechnology regulatory issues.

85. The potential of biotechnology to contribute to sustainable development had been recognized as early as 1992 in Agenda 21. The 2001 Human Development Report acknowledged the potential of biotechnology to tackle major health challenges facing poor countries, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. It also highlighted the importance of new crop varieties for food production in marginal ecological zones and the fact that the technology revolution and globalization were creating a new network age to replace the industrial age. All countries, even the poorest, needed to implement policies that encouraged innovation and to acquire the capacity to understand and adapt the new global technologies to their specific needs.

86. One of the main challenges of the Biotechnology Forum would be to review and discuss various options for biotechnological applications in food production with a view to assisting developing countries to make the choices that were in their best interest. The Forum was also expected to answer other questions, including what to do to make developing benefit better from advances in biotechnology. The intention of the Forum's organizers was to identify a number of concrete proposals for action intended to facilitate the transfer of biotechnologies to developing countries. UNIDO had prepared a series of events preceding the Forum, including regional meetings in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, which would be held in the first half of 2003. An International Programme Committee had also been set up. It would consist of eminent scientists, representatives of other United Nations agencies operating in that field as well as the public and private sectors.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.